

DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

LEPC REPORT

(Drafted 15 November 2006)

Public Safety Communications: Installation of the new Dispatch console & VC Hill repeater has been slowed by delays in squaring away the various frequencies & tones involved. As of this writing Bridger Communications expects to accomplish this installation during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday. The new Lone Peak repeater awaits resumption of operation of the ski lift, which is necessary to get to the top of the lift where the repeater is to be installed. The new repeater in Firehouse #2 south of Cameron should be completed in early December. At this point final approval of this latter site awaits determination of the exact costs associated with the Lone Peak job, in order to be absolutely sure we can fit it in our budget but, at this point it looks favorable.

Meanwhile, work has begun firming up arrangements for spring construction of the three microwave sites (Barter Ranch, VC Pass and Lone Peak) proposed by Interoperable Montana (IM) for Madison County. I have been assured by Northrup Grumman, the IM project director, that there will be an opportunity for local contracting of some of this work, which is presently estimated to total in the \$700,000 range, counting all the equipment to be installed.

The FY 06 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) award we were on track to receive to replace all the fire and EMS radios has hit a glitch. At the very end of the award process the determination was made that our application was really a County government application in contrast to a fire and EMS application, thereby rendering it ineligible. I sent out an explanation and request for reconsideration yesterday.

Radio Inventory: The county-wide inventory of all radios in use for public safety purposes in our County (that I mentioned last month) is proceeding slowly and is behind schedule. While there is some doubt as to the ultimate productivity of this effort, the intent is that we would receive upgraded replacement equipment from the urban centers of Montana that are shifting to trunking (which requires new radios, for the most part). Completion of the inventory is anticipated early in December.

Big Sky: The draft final report of the Big Sky Public Safety Planning Study undertaken by Firescope Mid-America is nearing completion. Judging from conversations with the consultants, defeat of the bond issue for the Courthouse improvement and law and justice center will have significant impact on their findings. One of the big questions they seem to have is the capability of Madison County's public safety infrastructure to respond to a major event or incident in Big Sky.. A public meeting will be held in Big Sky during the coming weeks to inform the public of the study's results, to be followed by a public presentation of the smooth final report to the County Board of Commissioners. Completion is scheduled for the entire project by 10 December.

CCC/CERT: Melinda Tichenor will report on the activity of CCC and CERT training. Financial issues related to this program are of particular concern as prospects for continuation of federal funding at the local level do not appear to be good. Alternatives will need to be developed if this promising program is to continue in our County. Melinda and her crew are actively trying to develop solutions to this problem.

WUI/Defensible Space: Although federal funds have been available for support of this program to help individual Madison County homeowners create defensible space around homes located in the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI), the program continues to languish. Joe Husar has been trying to jump start the program as part of his Risk Mitigation Coordinator duties but with little success. We

have proposed one last effort to get the program in gear and then, if there is still no perceivable community interest, we expect to terminate it, with attendant loss of those funds. Joe can provide further details to any of the members or their acquaintances interested in helping reinvigorate the program or take advantage of it for their own residence.

School Security: A well-attended meeting of all the County school superintendents, Sheriff's Department and Emergency Management Department was held in Sheridan on 24 October. The intent was to discuss school security issues and emergency planning. The opportunity for school officials and County folks to exchange perspectives and ideas was very valuable. The general feeling following a two plus hour meeting was that it had been very productive with much promise for future improvement to school security and emergency response capability.

Director Position: The Board of Commissioners have received a number of applications for the Director of Emergency Management position and will review them next Monday, after which interviews and selection will be made. The new person is expected to take over on January. I will assume the role of Public Safety Communications Coordinator for the county on a contract basis for the first six months of 2007.

Intermediate Wildland Firefighting Training: Harrison-Pony VFD is hosting subject training on 15-17 December. Eligible firefighters from other departments are invited to take part. Contact Trent Biggers, HVFD or Don Copple, DNRC (406 683 6305).